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Aruban snacks and where to find them

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‘Last ride’: U.S. says goodbye to Air Force One as Qatari jet awaits

Washington, United States
Is it goodbye Air Force One, hello Qatar Force One?
White House officials bade farewell on Thursday to one of the two jets that have been used to transport US presidents for more than 30 years.
The goodbye messages fueled speculation that a Boeing 747 controversially gifted to President Donald Trump by the Gulf emirate of Qatar is now due to enter service.
“’Well done, good and faithful servant. ‘The Last Ride,’”
Trump’s communications director Steven Cheung said in a post on X with a picture of the iconic white and blue jet after returning from the G7 summit in France.
U.S. Chief of Protocol Monica Crowley also posted a photograph of the same plane on the tarmac at Joint Base Andrews near Washington.
“I was honored to be aboard Air Force One last night on its final flight,” Crowley said on X.
“For nearly 40 years, it carried every President since George H.W. Bush. It wasn’t the most modern plane, but it was cozy. And every flight with President Trump was incredibly special.

Air Force One carrying US President Donald Trump lands at the Geneva Airport with Marine One helicopter in the foreground ahead of the G7 summit, in Geneva on June 15, 2026.

“Farewell and thank you.”
The aging aircraft is one of two heavily modified 747s that entered service in 1990 and are designated Air Force One when the president is aboard. The fate of the second jet is not yet clear.
The White House did not immediately respond when asked by AFP to comment.
But Trump is considering taking the new Qatari jet on its inaugural flight when he travels to Mount Rushmore next month as part of celebrations for America’s 250th anniversary, NBC News reported.
The US Air Force said in May that the Qatari jet had completed flight testing and would soon be ready for action, adding that it was “on schedule to roll out in a new red, white and blue livery this summer.”
Qatar’s gift of the jet, valued in the hundreds of millions of dollars, has raised major ethical and constitutional issues about what kind of gifts a president should receive from abroad. It has also raised security concerns about using an aircraft donated by a foreign power for use as the ultra-sensitive presidential plane.
The jets that serve as Air Force One are widely reported to have sophisticated countermeasures that can jam enemy radars and infrared tracking systems, plus dispensers for chaff -- metal shavings that distract radar-guided missiles -- and flares that blind heat-seeking missiles.
But billionaire Trump has been obsessed with replacing Air Force One since his first presidential term, even keeping a model of the jet in its new color scheme on his coffee table in the Oval Office.

Trump said last year that it would be “stupid” not to accept the gift, which the Pentagon formally acquired last year, and complained about the state of the current veteran planes.
He has said the Qatari plane will eventually be donated to his future presidential library as an exhibit.
The U.S. government has also contracted planemaker Boeing to deliver two new 747-8 aircraft to serve as the presidential jet but the program has suffered delays and cost overruns.❑

Bernie Sanders pushes 50-percent public stake in AI giants

Washington, United States
U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders on Thursday introduced legislation that would give the public a 50-percent ownership stake in the largest US artificial intelligence companies, the boldest plan yet to redistribute the industry’s soaring wealth.
The American AI Sovereign Wealth Fund Act would levy a one-time tax -- paid in stock rather than cash -- equal to half the equity of firms with at least $200 million in annual AI revenue.
The shares would be held in a government-run fund worth an estimated $7 trillion, with a 5-percent annual dividend delivering direct payments of more than $1,000 to every American.
“We can no longer sit back and allow a handful of Big Tech oligarchs to determine the future of this revolutionary technology with no democratic input,” the Vermont independent said.
The bill has virtually no chance of passing Congress, but Sanders, among the country’s most visible politicians, is likely to use it to shape a growing debate over AI, jobs and inequality.

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) speaks at the National Press Club on June 08, 2026 in Washington, DC. Sanders spoke about the impact of AI and the future of American politics as part of the National Press Club’s Headliners Event.

The proposal enters a debate in which the idea of public stakes in the technology is beginning to make headway -- a rarity in a country where decisions about major investments are almost exclusively left to the private sector.
U.S. President Donald Trump recently weighed the idea of the government buying shares in AI firms in what he called a possible “partnership with the American public.”
In a surprise to many, his administration has separately taken equity-style stakes in several companies, from mineral and semiconductor firms to quantum computing players.
According to news outlet Semafor, White House officials are split on how to structure any stakes in AI firms, among the most valuable companies in the world.
Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent favors using the equity to seed so-called “Trump accounts” for American children, while Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick prefers a sovereign wealth fund.

The idea of public participation in AI technology has been pitched to Trump by OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, and has been floated by Anthropic, the maker of Claude.
Despite increasing sales and usage, both loss-making companies are under pressure to raise enormous sums to finance the technology, which requires expensive computing to develop. Sanders’ proposal is not the only Democratic push to tax the AI windfall.
Senator Elizabeth Warren, who is popular on the left, has separately called for a levy on AI firms to support workers displaced by the technology, arguing its gains should not flow only to the wealthy.
Most industry groups and Big Tech companies will fiercely resist a plan that would dilute founder and investor control of the sector’s most valuable firms.❑

Ex-presidents and stars, but no Trump, turn out for Obama Library

Chicago, United States
All living U.S. ex-presidents with the notable absence of current White House occupant Donald Trump joined a star-studded line-up Thursday for the opening of Barack Obama's presidential center in Chicago.
Obama, 64, struck his trademark hopeful tone in a speech inaugurating the modernistic center.
The country's first Black president alluded to fears among many Americans that US democracy is in danger, winning applause with the phrase "no kings" a popular anti-Trump protest slogan.
But Obama also said that an "overwhelming majority" wants the nation to heal.
"People aren't looking for perpetual anger and division," he said. "They are looking for fairness and common sense and mutual respect."
The futuristic complex housing Obama's records and mementos from his two terms in office opens to the public on Friday.
Thursday was for celebrities including Steven Spielberg, Tom Hanks and Oprah Winfrey, alongside performances by U2's Bono, Stevie Wonder, Bruce Springsteen and hip-hop band The Roots.

(L-R) Former President Joe Biden and former first lady Jill Biden, from left, former President Barack Obama and former first lady Michelle Obama, former President George W. Bush and former first lady Laura Bush, and former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pose ahead of the dedication ceremony for the opening of the Barack Obama Presidential Center, in John Lewis Plaza, on June 18, 2026 in Chicago, Illinois. Barack Obama served as the 44th president of the United States from 2009 to 2017 and was the first African American to hold the office.

This was also one of those rare occasions when the country's former presidents gathered in one place.

Republican George W. Bush and Democrats Bill Clinton and Joe Biden walked on stage, joining Obama, his wife Michelle Obama and their daughters Sasha and Malia.
Not only was 80-year-old Trump absent but he routinely continues to launch criticism and often personal insults at Obama, shattering the informal truce traditionally observed within the presidents' club.
"I'm so disappointed we've reached this point," Illinois Senator Dick Durbin said of the acrimonious environment in Washington.
"I'm honored that President Bush would make this a bipartisan salute to Barack Obama and Michelle," he added. "We need to get back in that spirit again, and we can, America can get through this and come together."
Foreign guests at the gathering included former Italian prime minister Matteo Renzi and former German chancellor Angela Merkel.
Meanwhile, hundreds of Chicagoans watched from a distance on the Midway Plaisance, the mile-long park stretching past the University of Chicago, where Obama once taught law.

- Chicago, launchpad for Obama -
Chicago's South Side played a prominent role in Obama's career.
He cut his political teeth there as a community organizer in the 1980s before representing the area in the Illinois state Senate, then winning a US Senate seat in 2004.
Still in his first term as a senator, he launched an outsider bid for the presidency and went on to win two terms, leading the nation between 2009 and 2017.
Now the neighborhood will play host to the former president's complex, which features an NBA-sized basketball court a nod to Obama's and Chicago's shared love of the sport and the 225-foot (69-meter) tall granite tower housing his museum.
The stark architecture has drawn astonishment and outright criticism, with Trump comparing it to a trash can. More generous critics have called the building the "Obamalisk" and compared it to a "Star Wars" spaceship.

But the $850 million center will enshrine Obama's core message of "hope," said Valerie Jarrett, CEO of the Obama Foundation and a former top White House aide during his presidency.❑

Trump walks back plans to remove ocean study tools after outcry

Washington, United States
Facing opposition including from Republican senators, U.S. President Donald Trump's administration is pausing plans to dismantle a deep-sea monitoring system that has been used for a decade.
The hundreds of devices are part of the Ocean Observatories Initiative, a program primarily funded by the federal government.
The National Science Foundation said Thursday it "appreciates the concerns raised by the range of stakeholders that have informed us they rely on data" collected by the system.
"Effective immediately, NSF will not proceed with further removal or descoping of equipment from the remaining arrays and will continue operations including planned maintenance," the agency said in a statement.
For one set of devices situated on the U.S. Northwest coast that had already been removed, "we are developing plans to redeploy the equipment after servicing," the NSF said.
The announcement comes one day after the US Senate passed a bipartisan bill aimed at blocking removal of the deep-sea instruments.

Lawmakers across party lines called the initiative wasteful and a threat to coastal communities.
Installed approximately a decade ago, the network reportedly cost some $360 million and was meant to remain active for a quarter century.

Its data is used to monitor the effects of climate change on marine environments.
Researchers have used it to study how the ocean absorbs greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, the effects of marine heatwaves on fisheries, and how ocean currents influence weather.
"Thankfully common sense has prevailed," Chris Robbins, associate director of science at Ocean Conservancy, said in a statement to AFP, describing the tools as "indispensable."
"The outcry was swift and loud for very good reason: The OOI system is second-to-none in the world and provides data that quite literally saves lives and livelihoods," Robbins said. "We simply could not afford to scrap this asset."❑

U.S. President Donald Trump speaks during a Medal of Honor Ceremony in the East Room of the White House on June 18, 2026 in Washington, DC.

Comedian Jordan Klepper wishes satire was harder in age of Trump

Los Angeles, United States
Skewering the oddities of president Donald Trump's administration and his devoted American supporters has made comedian Jordan Klepper a household name in the United States, as a host of late-night satire "The Daily Show."
He just wishes that the president and his followers wouldn't make it so easy.
"There's never a shortage of things to talk about, or characters in the orbit of Donald Trump to find humor within, but sometimes the absurdity lies more with him than it should," Klepper told AFP in an interview in Los Angeles.
"I wish it relied a little bit more on us bringing comedy to the table. He doesn't need to work as hard."
Klepper is part of a revolving cast on "The Daily Show" who take a sideways glance at the day's events.
He frequently goes to Trump rallies or other events in the Make America Great Again (MAGA) sphere, speaking to the faithful whose belief in the president seems impervious to facts.

U.S. comedian Jordan Klepper poses during a photo session at the London Hotel, on June 4, 2026 in West Hollywood, California.

"Donald Trump is a peacetime president and has never been wrong about anything, and yet we are in a war that we were promised not to be in," he said, referring to hostilities with Iran.
"The Epstein files were supposed to be released, they are not, and yet you still have people who are trumpeting this idea of Donald Trump: 'promises made, promises kept'."
America's balkanized media landscape is a major problem for the nation, Klepper thinks.
"People live in very different realities all across this country, and their realities are reflected by the news sources that they get, the friend circles they have, the social media that they interpret," he says.
"My job is: Let's point out that hypocrisy, have fun with it, hopefully do it from a place of empathy, but also a place of true curiosity about how people can hold certain truths that defy logic or reality."

- Late night -
While U.S. satire has tended traditionally to be a little tamer than its European counterpart, a handful of late night shows have become redoubts over the decade-or-so since Trump came onto the political scene.

The president makes a natural target for hosts and their teams of writers, who churn out dense monologues that often have the dual purpose of informing an audience about events they might not have seen on a traditional news broadcast -- all while mocking the major players.
Trump has repeatedly claimed the shows are unfair to him, and has campaigned openly for them to be taken off the air.
The 80-year-old declared victory after Jimmy Kimmel's show was briefly suspended last year, and celebrated after the cancellation of Stephen Colbert's "The Late Show" after three decades on the air.
As linear television shrinks in importance, many shows have cultivated audiences online, where clips can ricochet around the internet something Klepper's made-to-go-viral encounters benefit from.

The irony of his success coming from the same systemic design that traps people in their information bubbles is not lost on Klepper, 47.
"The algorithm speaks to us all differently. It whispers in our ears and tells us the things that we want to hear," he says.
"We are products of the algorithms that get fed to us."
While Klepper's interactions with MAGA faithful are intended to highlight what he sees as the inconsistencies in their beliefs, he tries to treat the people he meets with respect.
Fundamentally, he says, it comes down to a conviction that people all over America no matter who they vote for have more in common than they often realize.
"I don't have an answer as to how this country comes together," he says.❑

Sean Penn to direct film on January 6 Capitol assault: U.S. media

Los Angeles, United States
Three-time Oscar winner Sean Penn is to direct a film centering on a police officer caught up in the January 6, 2021 assault on the US Capitol by supporters of President Donald Trump, entertainment media reported Tuesday.
The film, which Penn has also reportedly written, is expected to star Academy Award nominee Bradley Cooper in the role of the currently un-named officer, Deadline said.
Production is scheduled for next year, and is expected to be handled by Warner Bros., the studio behind the Oscar-winning "One Battle After Another," for which Penn received his most recent golden statuette. Representatives for the 65-year-old actor-director did not immediately respond to AFP requests for comment.
The Capitol attack is a huge fautline in American public life, which came when thousands of Trump supporters stormed the building in a bid to stop the certification of Joe Biden's presidential election victory.

U.S. filmmaker and actor Sean Penn takes part in a master class during the 17th edition of the Lumiere Film Festival in Lyon, central eastern France on October 13, 2025.

Trump continues to deny that he lost the 2020 election, and has repeatedly called those who participated in the attack "patriots," issuing pardons and commutations even to those who admitted assaulting police officers.
Penn, known for his left-of-center politics and social activism, attended legislative hearings investigating the insurrection, where he was photographed sitting alongside officers who had were caught up in the incident, including Michael Fanone and Daniel Hodges.❑

Stuffed toys and surfboards: Japan used goods market booms overseas

Bangkok, Thailand

Under a scorching sun in a Bangkok suburb, a whistle blows and shouts fill the air as dozens of shoppers rush into a warehouse bearing the sign "Japanese Second-Hand Store".

From bags and bicycles to surfboards and suitcases, the Japanese second-hand market is booming, with quality-conscious buyers in other Asian countries increasingly tapping into the circular economy trend.

"What is considered garbage for them can still be useful in Thailand," 36-year-old Lookpoo Sathitpanyapon, who runs a Facebook store selling toy keychains, told AFP.

"That bag! That bag!" one shopper shouts while racing through the warehouse, filled with everything from colourful toys including popular Gundam action figures to ceramic bowls, beaded necklaces and even used umbrellas.

The idea of the so-called circular economy, which involves recycling and reusing existing products, has become increasingly mainstream in recent years, according to Amsterdam-based think tank Circle Economy Foundation, describing it as a "megatrend" in a 2024 report.

In this photo taken on May 14, 2026, buyers look at carts of sporting equipment and stuffed toys as they wait to bid on them at the Hamaya wholesale auction site in Higashimatsuyama, Saitama Prefecture.

In Japan, the thriving second-hand goods market has doubled in value since 2010, according to market research agency Kadence International, and multiple Japanese re-use companies are expanding across Asia.

Treasure Factory, a Tokyo-based second-hand store operator, now has six stores in Thailand and three in Taiwan.

Used-goods industry leader Bookoff partnered in April with FamilyMart to collect items in its convenience stores across Japan and export them to one of Bookoff's 26 shops in Malaysia or Kazakhstan.

Smaller ventures are also thriving.

At an auction near Tokyo, Thai trader Kangyapat Yoosanong bids for a wagonful of plushies -- crucial items in her lucrative business selling Japanese used goods in her home country.

"Everything (used in) Japan is popular" abroad, said the 35-year-old, who shelled out 340,000 yen, around $2,100, for 100 kilograms (220 pounds) of stuffed toys.

The plushies, along with the rest of her haul of bags and toys, will soon end up in the Bangkok warehouse.

- 'Winner's game' -

By the day's end, most of the stock is gone at the weekly auction in Saitama, north of Tokyo, according to the sale's organising company Hamaya, with foreigners representing roughly a third of bidders.

"It is difficult to sell second-hand goods in Japan" if they're more than seven years old, Hamaya president Ippei Kobayashi told AFP. "But they are still popular in foreign markets."

At the warehouse in Bangkok's Nonthaburi suburb, the sound of people rummaging through products and plastic crates clattering against shopping carts echoes through the building.

Some items appear brand new, with their original plastic wrapping still intact.

"It's a winner's game," said Wanna Promthep, 70, who queued ahead of the opening with her daughter and son-in-law.

"Those who can spot good quality will get the best products," she said, standing guard over a large pile of handbags.

But it's not just second-hand Japanese teddy bears and clothes that are snapped up for their high quality abroad, with 1.7 million used vehicles exported around the world last year, ending up everywhere from the Middle East to Africa and Europe.

- Reducing waste -

Despite the trend, global circularity is still in decline, Circle Economy Foundation said in its 2024 report.

The world economy had consumed nearly as many materials in the previous six years as in the entirety of the 20th century, it said.❑

Cuba unveils biggest free-market reforms in regime's history

Havana, Cuba

Cuban Prime Minister Manuel Marrero on Thursday unveiled a sweeping package of nearly 200 free-market reforms aimed at rescuing the communist island from a severe crisis aggravated by a U.S. fuel blockade.

Marrero detailed 176 reforms encompassing everything from banking, salaries and company ownership to foreign investment and agriculture in a two-hour speech to the National Assembly.

Daniel Torralbas, a London-based Cuban economist, described the measures as "the most profound economic reform program... since the 1959 revolution" of Fidel Castro.

"It represents a significant shift in the country's economic development model," he told AFP.

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel a day earlier had argued the need for "urgent changes" to stave off economic collapse in the face of unprecedented US pressure.

The reforms, which have been endorsed by the Communist Party, are to be put to a vote Thursday in the National Assembly.

The main shifts, which Torralbas described as "drastic," revolve around the role of the private sector in the Cuban economy.

For the first time private companies of over 100 workers will be authorized.

Cubans will be allowed to own more than own company, private banks will be authorized and foreign investment in the private sector will be permitted.

Tourism, agriculture and the currency market are among the other sectors that will be thrown open to private investors, whether Cuban or foreign, Marrero said.He did not give a timeframe for the implementation of the reforms, but Diaz-Canel had on Wednesday urged the Communist Party against putting off the hard decisions.❑

People walk outside a state trading company in Havana on June 18, 2026.

ARUBA TODAY

Ghana pushes for concrete slavery reparations

Accra, Ghana

Ghana hosted a landmark global conference on Thursday seeking to translate growing political support for slavery reparations into practical commitments towards justice.

The conference, which brought together leaders from around Africa and the Caribbean, comes after the United Nations adopted a historic resolution that declared the transatlantic slave trade "the gravest crime against humanity".

Since the resolution's adoption in March, the campaign for reparations has gathered "unprecedented momentum", said Ghana's Foreign Minister Samuel Ablakwa.

While non-binding, the resolution pushed for by Ghanaian President John Mahama goes beyond simple acknowledgement and asks nations involved in the slave trade to engage in "restitution" and "compensation".

"We won the battle against slavery, we won the battle against colonialism, we won the battle against apartheid, and we are confident that we shall win the battle against reparatory injustice," Ablakwa told the conference.

The adoption of the UN resolution marked the strongest endorsement yet by the international community of the case for reparations, garnering the support of 123 UN member states.

Since then, French President Emmanuel Macron has endorsed the symbolic repeal of royal decrees that governed slavery in French colonies. He has said the issue of reparations must be addressed, while warning against making "false promises".

Speaking to the Accra conference by video, Macron said history cannot be "reduced to a merely financial logic".

Nigerian Nobel Prize winner, writer, playwright, and poet Wole Soyinka (2nd L), arrives at the Next Step Summit, a high-level consultative conference on the Landmark UN Resolution on the Trafficking of Enslaved Africans in Accra, on June 18, 2026.

The French were the third-largest slave traders in Europe, after the British and the Portuguese.

Pope Leo XIV last month issued an apology for the Catholic Church's centuries-long delay in condemning slavery, calling it "a wound in Christian memory".

"The growing international support for these conversations demonstrates that reparatory justice is no longer a peripheral issue," Ghana's foreign minister said.

- 'Beyond symbolism' -

Once considered a hub of the transatlantic slave trade, Ghana is now "transitioning from being a crime scene to a sanctuary for healing and reparative justice", Ablakwa told hundreds of delegates.

The west African country has been at the forefront of connecting people in the diaspora to Africa, granting Ghanaian citizenship to more than 1,000 people in recent years.

Mahama announced the creation of three working panels to explore practical pathways to reparatory justice.One will be an advisory panel led by heads of state, another a group of experts focused on restitution, and a third examining the legal aspects of reparations.

"The question before us is not whether history can be changed it cannot but whether we have the courage to confront it honestly and the determination to turn recognition into meaningful action," said Mahama.

The line-up of speakers at the three-day event included the leaders of Barbados, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Namibia and Liberia, alongside Nigerian Nobel literature prize winner and global rights activist Wole Soyinka.

Soyinka said reparation "must go beyond symbolism".

"It is not merely about apology or compensation it is about the rehumanization of memory and the restoration of values that were distorted by centuries of dehumanization," he said.

He also cautioned about seeking justice for the past without confronting current failures, "including the ways in which we still commodify human lives on this continent today", citing the kidnapping of school children for ransom, a common crime in his home country.❑

Art Basel sees high-voltage Picasso, Hockney sales

Basel, Switzerland

Art Basel made a splashy debut this week despite global turbulence, with an eight-figure sale for a Picasso during an invite-only VIP preview, and a David Hockney fetching $8.5 million.

The flagship fair in the Swiss city brings together 290 galleries from 43 countries and territories and is one of the year's top events for contemporary art sales.

It opens to the public on Thursday after two days reserved for wealthy collectors who flock to the event in search of exceptional pieces.

On Tuesday, a 1963 painting by Pablo Picasso, titled "Le peintre et son modele dans un paysage", was sold for $35 million by Zurich gallery Hauser & Wirth.

Artist David Hockney poses with his artworks "Card Players #3 2014" (L) and "A Bigger Card Players 2015" at a press preview of his new exhibition entitled "Painting and Photography" in central London, on May 14, 2015.

Basel Exclusive, a new initiative encouraging galleries to reserve significant works for their first public presentation at the fair, made its debut this year and saw another Picasso fetching between $6 million and $6.5 million for French gallery Almine Rech, according to the fair's organisers.

US gallery Gray sold a canvas by British painter David Hockney, who died last week at the age of 88, for $8.5 million.

"The mood is very good, there is a positive, optimistic mood and feel. It's very buzzy," said Vincenzo de Bellis, artistic director and a member of Art Basel's executive team.

"Certainly, we cannot deny that uncertainties and the geopolitical situation has an impact, but so far what we have seen in the last few months is that there is more positivity than negativity around the art market," he said.

- Market rebound -

According to a report prepared for Art Basel by UBS bank and the firm Arts Economics, the global art market bounced back by four percent in 2025 after two years of decline, climbing back to around $59.6 billion.

In the face of macroeconomic uncertainty, the year had got off to a cautious start but demand picked up in the second half.❑

The stories of "Compa Nanzi"

(Oranjestad)—The most popular character you may hear about in the Caribbean is Anansi, known locally on Aruba as "Compa Nanzi". Local children grew up hearing the tales of the conniving spider, and his legacy forms part of the oral narrative tradition that is common in Aruba.

Although the stories are most popular in the Caribbean, "Compa Nanzi" is not entirely unknown globally, especially not in the West African region. Brought to the "new world" by enslaved Africans from Ghana, the historical thread of how Nanzi was introduced on Aruba follows the enslaved Africans in Curacao during the colonial era, which saw the biggest population of enslaved Africans in the Dutch Caribbean.

The stories of Compa Nanzi were a sign of hope for freedom among the slaves, who passed around different stories involving the famous spider through word of mouth, due to not being able to express their native culture in the new world. These stories were a way to not only preserve their culture, but it acted as a medium for relief during the harsh treatment to which they were subjected to.

It wasn't until the end of the nineteenth century that the stories of Nanzi were written down in different languages. However, not all stories are completely alike in every country, as is the risk of oral story telling. However, one thing will always be dominant in Compa Nanzi's stories: his sneaky ways to get what he wants!

How Nanzi fooled the king

One day Nanzi was taking a stroll near the castle of Shon Arei, the king. He had this sudden urge to walk in. He didn't think too much about it and committed to what he had in mind. It was a warm afternoon, and the castle personnel were taking their afternoon nap. Even the soldier guarding the castle door was fast asleep, snoring so loud that his beard bounced up and down on his chin. Nanzi just slipped past him, looked back for a moment then walk right on in.

Nanzi stumbled upon the king's quarters. With all his excitement he sat in the king's throne, and put on his crown that was hanging on the side of the throne. It was very hot that day, and it wasn't long until Nanzi too fell asleep, right there on the king's throne. He was so deep in sleep and snoring so loud, that even when the king found him in his seat, Nanzi did not even notice.

Shon Arei was flabbergasted by the sight of Nanzi on his throne, wearing his crown. How disrespectful! "Soldiers, get him!" he commanded. Nanzi was sound asleep, but when the soldiers picked him up, he jumped from fright. By then though, the soldier already had him in their hold.

"Put him in a sack, stitch it up and throw him in the ocean!" the king said furiously. Two soldiers immediately entered the chamber, took the crown off Nanzi's head and pushed him in a sack.

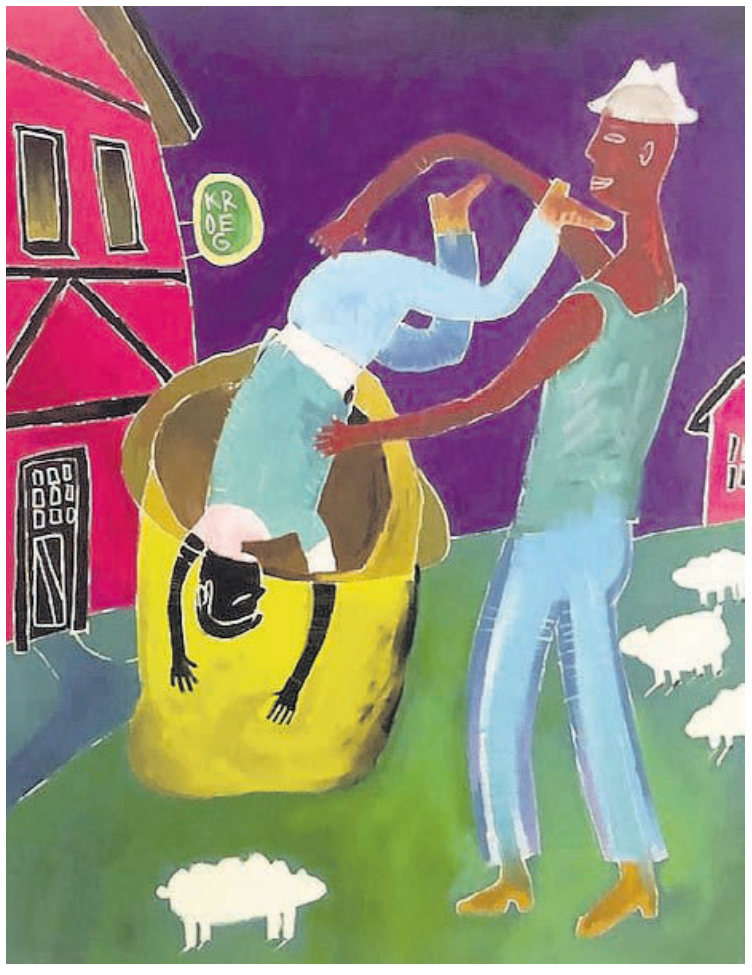
Nanzi was terrified; it looks like this time he won't get away with his schemes. To get to the ocean, the soldier walked a long distance, and where beginning to feel very thirsty. Luckily they passed by a pub, and decided to have a nice cold beer. They set the sack with Nanzi in it outside and went to enjoy the refreshments. Nanzi was still trembling with fear in the sack.

What is that he hears? A herd of sheep walking by? "Compadre, listen here!" Nanzi screamed as loud as he could. The sheep herder got close to the sack. "What is this?"

"Man, there is something very beautiful in here that you can see. It's very rare and strange, but indeed, there is something so beautiful in here that you've never seen or will ever see," Nanzi told the herder.

The herder, very dumb, believed Nanzi's word. "Let me see!" he said.

"Well if you must insist," Nanzi said, "I'll let you take a look, but only for a quick second." The herder opened the sack, and Nanzi immediately jumped out.



Before the herder could even take a look into the sack, Nanzi pushed him in it, and the herder fell head first in.

Nanzi didn't waste any time, and closed off the sack real tight. He then picked up the herder's hat and starting walking behind the traveling sheep as if nothing happened. After a little while, the soldiers headed back outside to continue their journey. As they picked up the sack, the poor herder started screaming to let him out, but the soldiers ignored him, thinking it was Nanzi.

Shon Arei went strolling a while later. He thought to himself: "This time Nanzi could not get away with his foolishness. He probably drowned in that sack ages ago." That is why, when he saw Nanzi walk behind the herd of sheep on the street, he was flabbergasted again. "Nanzi! Aren't you suppose to be at the bottom of the ocean floor?"

"I was, Your Majesty," Nanzi replied. But you know what; there are so many things to see down there in the sack! Like this herd of sheep. Seeing that they had no herder, I started walking behind them and gained their trust pretty quickly. At the bottom of the ocean there are so many wonderful things, like diamonds, and bags of gold. Chests of silver and other precious stones," Nanzi told the king.

"What is that you say?" the king was intrigued. "I want to see it too!"

The king immediately demanded to his soldiers to be put in a sack and be placed in the ocean. Naturally, Shon Arei died because of this. He was never found again. Nanzi followed the soldier back to the castle, where sat once again on the late king's thrown and put his crown on. He took possession of all of Shon Arei's belongings, and lived the rest of his life as king.

Story and pictures are from "Kon Nanzi a Nek Shon Arei (i otro kuentanan antiano di e araña sabi)" by Nilda Pinto.

ARUBA TODAY

Aruba's underwater wonderland

(Oranjestad)—Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots you can explore. So take your snorkeling gear and visit some of these top places for underwater exploration.

Tres Trapi

'Tres Trapi' means three steps in Papiamento. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by a tiny stairway carved into the rocky coastline. Tres Trapi is a small beach, located on the north-western side of the island, an approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you walk right into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While you're snorkeling, you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean Sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animals, keep your distance and just enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.

Antilla shipwreck

Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its portside in Malmok bay, and the sunken WWII ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.

Baby Beach

Baby beach is a lagoon with crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Further in the lagoon, you'll find a lot of people snorkeling. This is an excellent spot to go under water exploring—but do take care not to go too far out; outside the lagoon the waves can be pretty rough! In the lagoon there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.

Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. The main entrance to reach the beach is through a small bridge that takes you through the mangrove trees. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, accompanied with wooden stairs built to allow easy access to the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience. Inside the bay, the water is clear and you'll find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is snorkel heaven. ❑

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Aruban snacks and where to find them

ORANJESTAD — Want to taste something different for a change? How about some Aruban snacks that you can find all around the island? Hop in your car, and go to these locations to find some of the most popular and tasty snacks that are beloved by our locals.

One of the staples of Aruban cuisine and snacks is the Pastechi. Pastechi is a Caribbean fried pastry that is filled with cheese, meat, chicken, veggies and sometimes even fish! Or perhaps you might want to try a croquette, locally called a "kroket," which is a crusty fried snack with typically a meat and dough mix filling. The Aruban kroket is based on its Dutch counterpart, the "bitterbal".

These two snacks are typically found in all local snack trucks, which can be found all over the island, including on the side of the main road that stretches from San Nicolas to the Hotel Area. You can also find them at local bakeries all over the island. These places may also sell other snacks and sandwiches too, perfect for on-the-road lunch break.

While you're at it, why not accompany your snack with a refreshing "batido"? Batidos are fruit shakes, typically made with added milk for some creaminess. However, you can also ask to hold the milk. Batidos are commonly found in snack shops too. You may find some batidos along the flea market downtown. If you are looking for something a bit more fresh and healthy, why not try some coconuts, or shaved ice from local vendors? These vendors carry their little shop at the back of their truck, so they are ever-moving around the island. However, there are a few spots where you can almost always find a coconut/shaved ice vendor:

- Right next to the Red Anchor in San Nicolas, on the way to Baby Beach.
- Along the main road next to the airport field.
- At the California Light House.
- At the Alto Vista Chapel.

These vendors may also sell other delights, like the beloved coconut-based dessert "cocada" or peanuts. All in all, in Aruba, you can always find some place to take a break and have a bite of something local, you maybe just might have to look for them!❑

Photo credit: wheninaruba.com

Fun facts about the "transhi" hedges!

(Oranjestad)—When off-roading, you may encounter some houses that have rock hedges, aligned perfectly and held together by cement or sometimes nothing at all.

These hedges are called "transhi," and have a historical and cultural meaning on the island. Used by cunukeros* around the island back when agriculture played a more dominant role in day-to-day life and survival, these stone hedges represent the resilience of our great-grand parents, who had to make do with what nature gave them. These stone structures are traditionally placed carefully on top of each other. No cement or other binding mixture was used to hold the structure together. Though not commonly used for modern homes, the few structures that remain around the island stood the test of time, some completely intact even after decades of rain, wind and urbanization.

These stone hedges are a representation of the Aruba's unique farming culture which valued durability, sustainability and resilience.

*cunukero: Aruban farmers. ❑

Pictures extracted from the 'Plantage Zorg en Hoop' collection on Coleccion.aw

Aruba's kite flying tradition

(Oranjestad)—Every year for King's Day, Arubans gather with friends and family to fly kites. Big or small, paper or plastic, blue skies fill up with these colorful flying contraptions, brightening our yearly celebration of the Dutch Monarch.

The tradition of flying kites starts at home in the weeks leading up to King's Day. These kites were traditionally made with things found in the nearby mondi* and in the kitchen at home. Using dried up cactus sticks for the frame, old news papers, and glue made from flour, water and salt to dry faster (some people even use cornstarch slurry as glue), kids usually make their own kites with their friends, parents or other close family members. Tails are made from old bed sheets, ripped and tied together to create a long string of fabric trailing behind the back end of the kite. To finish off the process, people used fish lines or thin rope to tie three corners of the kite together. Another long string of rope is tied in the knotted center and bundled up, used to steer the kite as it flies in the air. Decorating the kite was especially important, and children would use paint to create their own designs—the more colorful, the better!

People usually fly their kites in big open fields, like empty soccer and baseball fields found all around the island around noon, when the sun is at its brightest. In the past few years, kite flying has become a sport in which groups of people would battle against each other to see whose kite is the biggest, the prettiest, and whose could fly flawlessly and longer in the air.

*Mondi: Aruban woods.❑

Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use

ORANJESTAD—Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

Pineapple

Pineapple has more uses than topping it on your Christmas ham. According to elders, the skin of a pineapple is great to use to refresh your body. Clean the skin thoroughly and make tea or warapa* with it. It is said that this tea can also be drank after an operation on the ovaries or uterus. This gets rid of irritation and inflammation.

Arrowroot

Arrowroot is native to tropical America and can be sold as a powder or whole. It is said that you can take arrowroot powder and make a "shalup" (porridge) for stomach pain or when you're feeling weak. You can make it with milk too, but it is advised to best use just water. You can also add prunes for a bit of sweetness. Arrowroot shalup is also good to treat an unhealthy gut or for diarrhea.

To make arrowroot shalup, boil a bit of water and add one tablespoon of arrowroot powder and stir continuously until you reach porridge consistency. If you make a shalup with milk, add a pinch of salt. Raw arrowroot powder can be used to powder babies.

Eggplant/Aubergine

Eggplants, or aubergines, are easy to find in supermarkets around the world and can be grown all year round on the island. Related to potato and tomato, eggplants are good to calm nerves. It can also be used to lower blood pressure, by steeping its leaves in boiled water and drinking it. You can also make eggplant juice to help purify your blood. However, do make sure to drink slowly; let it mix with your spit and then swallow.

Eggplant kataplan* can also be used to treat skin tumors, abscesses and hemorrhoids. Eggplant kataplan can also be used externally to treat arthritis.❑

***warapa: term referring to a water and sugar solution, a.k.a simple syrup.**
***kataplan: porridge-like mixture used externally for wounds or parts of the body that are painful or swollen.**

The district of Savaneta: A quick history guide to the island's first capital

(Oranjestad)—Before Oranjestad became the island nation's capital, Aruba's first capital was the district of Savaneta. Here is where the cultural identity of Aruba was born, and from where the rest of the island developed into what it is today.

Savaneta is said to have been the first place where the Caquetio inhabitants first stepped foot on the island. Though there isn't hard evidence to back this up, but considering the legend of the Cacique Arua, it is believed that there were already movements on Aruba and Savaneta around 88 AD.

The Caquetios probably made their way to the island either from Venezuela, Colombia or other Caribbean islands in the region, but with good weather it was relatively easy for them to travel back and forth in their canoes. So, since the Caquetios discovered the island, Aruba found her first form of civilization.

It wasn't until 1499 when Aruba met another group of people who set foot on the island: the Spanish explorer Alonso de Ojeda. De Ojeda first took notice of Aruba off the coast of Venezuela, during his exploration of the Latin American country. This was on August 9th, 1499. However, de Ojeda didn't actually sail to the island till 4 days later, on August 23rd, 1499. This was the beginning of the Spanish era on Aruba (1499-1636).

Alonso usually didn't stop at every island or land he saw, especially not in the Caribbean. He would often take notice of land from afar and continue sailing. However, Aruba was an exception. He had heard that there were "quebracho"(Kibrahacha) trees on the island, which were commonly used to produce dye or paint. But since these trees could not be found in Savaneta, he continued to search in the area of what is now known as Santa Cruz. The best way to transport the tree barks was via a route passing through Savaneta, and so the first road between Savaneta and Santa Cruz was made.

The Dutch colonial era (1636-1805)

During the 80-year war between The Netherlands and Spain, Dutch explorers and merchants began to travel to the ABC islands. Once they landed in Aruba, they deported the small Arawakan and Spanish community that was living on the island. This was the beginning of colonization of the ABC islands by the Dutch empire. Around the same, the West Indian Company (WIC) was born. Bonaire and Curacao were mostly used for plantations, where the Dutch had transported slaves from Africa. Aruba, on the other hand, was mostly used to raise cattle and to house the haring factory. The Dutch had often forced the indigenous community to work for them.

In 1636, when the Netherlands won the war against Spain, the country surrendered the islands to the Dutch.

The Dutch administration appointed the island's first commander, an Irish man named N. Williams. Because the Dutch were interested in other Caribbean islands and countries in South America, they imported Dutch merchants and business men, all of whom resided in Savaneta. This way, Savaneta officially became the island's first capital.

However, at the end of the 18th century, the commander at the time, J.R. Lauffer, moved his office to what is now "Horse Bay" in Oranjestad. Because the highest office on the island moved away from Savaneta, the capital lost its title to what was called then Playa.

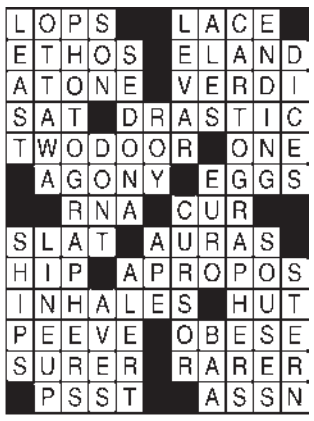
How Savaneta got its name

The name Savaneta probably has a Spanish origin. It was said that when the Spanish climbed a hill called Yara, they saw that the area was mostly open and had no big trees. In Spanish, such a land area is called a "sabana".

Because of its land surface, Savaneta was a great place to construct cattle farms. From here, the farmer culture on Aruba was born. Before the Aruban Gold Rush and the construction of the Refinery in San Nicolas, most residents were farmers, and Savaneta had many inhabitants that farmed fruits and vegetables. They also continued the tradition of raising cattle, like goat, sheep, pigs and horses. Savaneta was one of the first places on the island to have a general farming culture. From this culture, many other traditions were born, like the Dera Gay Holiday that we celebrate every year on June 24th.❑

Source: Historia di Savaneta (History of Savaneta) by Adolf "Dufi" Kock.

CROSSWORD
By THOMAS JOSEPH



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13 Sun Valley setting
14 Tendency
16 Reunion group
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18 What a jeté involves
20 Increase
22 Cuts off
23 Showy flower
25 Prepares for battle
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36 In front
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41 Treatment center
42 Diner patron
43 Steak choice
44 Fabric worker

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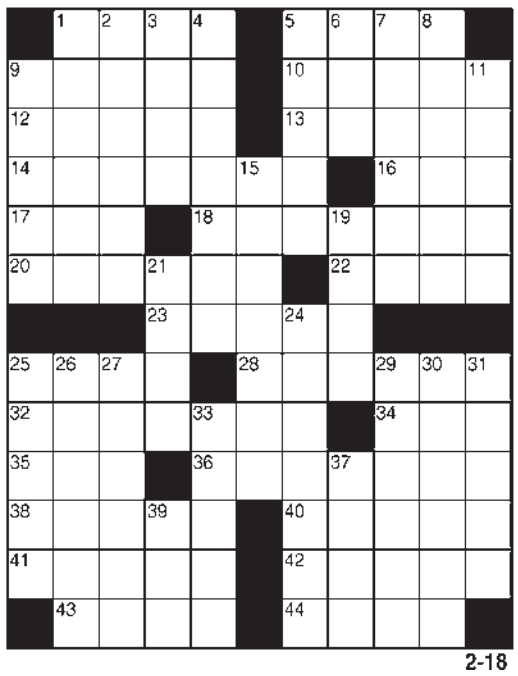
5 Juanita's friend
6 Stashed
7 Luke's father
8 Trailing
9 Pool need
11 Album tracks
15 Triton orbits it
19 Sassy
21 Fail to fail
24 Set to wed
25 Birch's cousin
26 Book buyer
27 Mason of movies
29 Take to the sky
30 Caretaker
31 Raring to go
33 "You don't say!"
37 Simple cart
39 Stirrup setting



2-18

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-18 CRYPTOQUOTE

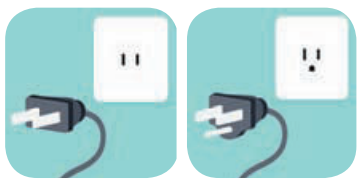
WDINAD GNT JFAAG F LDAQNZ, GNT QMNTYB IPAQE JFRD EMDJ TQD F ONJLTEDA HPEM QYNH PZEDAZDE EN QDD HMN EMDG ADFYYG FAD. — HPYY IDAADYY

Cryptoquote: CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN. NAKED PEOPLE HAVE LITTLE OR NO INFLUENCE IN SOCIETY. — MARK TWAIN

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

						9	4	
				6	9	5		
	7	2						
			4				6	
6	2	4						
3							1	
	9			4	6		2	3
			8			6		
	8		2		3	1	9	

Difficulty: ★★★★ 6/19

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Answer to previous puzzle

5	4	6	2	8	7	9	3	1
2	7	9	6	3	1	5	8	4
8	3	1	9	5	4	2	6	7
9	8	2	1	4	6	7	5	3
4	1	3	5	7	9	8	2	6
7	6	5	3	2	8	1	4	9
3	2	4	7	9	5	6	1	8
1	9	8	4	6	2	3	7	5
6	5	7	8	1	3	4	9	2

Difficulty: ★★★ 6/18

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Vast areas of coral reef could resist climate change: study

Mombasa, Kenya

In the crystalline waters off Kenya's coast, coral reefs are thriving evidence of a rare good news story in the battle to protect oceans from the ravages of climate change.

A new study presented at the Our Ocean Conference in Mombasa on Tuesday finds that 166,000 square kilometers of the world's coral reefs around a third of the total are particularly "climate-resilient", meaning they have the potential to survive through major ocean warming events.

The study by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Macquarie University in Australia challenges the findings of the IPCC, the global authority on climate change, which has stated 70 to 90 percent of coral reefs could die with global warming of 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels, and 99 percent at 2 C.

"Our models are showing a much more hopeful future for corals reefs. We predict that there are many climate resilient reefs around the world that will persist over time," Stacy Jupiter, executive director for marine conservation at WCS, told AFP.

Action is still needed since only 28 percent of those resilient reefs are being actively protected.

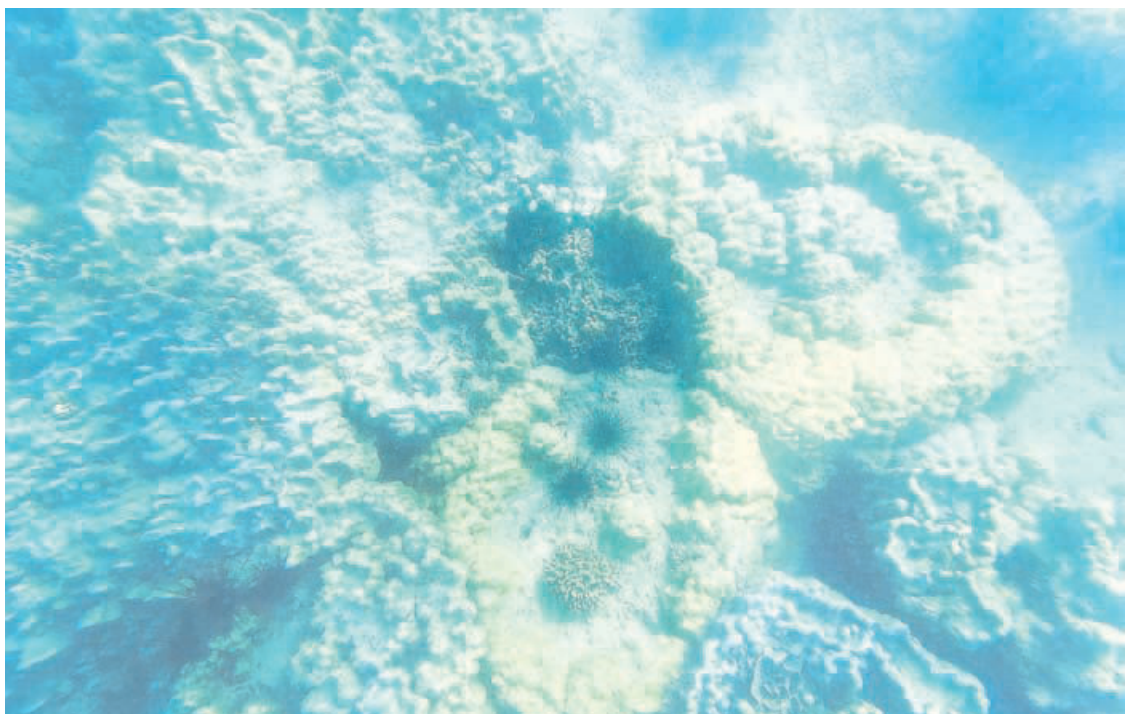
Down the coast from Mombasa, on Kenya's paradisical Wasini-Mkwiro island, villagers are showing the way.

As local fishermen bring in their catch from the beach, it is weighed, measured and logged by local data collectors in the village.

Other members of the "beach management unit" patrol the waters to make sure no one is overfishing or using destructive equipment. Others plant seaweed and mangroves, and scoop out rubbish.

"We want to keep this ecosystem as pristine as possible because we know the benefits," said Edward Karanja, Kenya Wildlife Service warden for the nearby Kisite marine park, citing the importance of tourism and fishing to locals.

Thanks to their efforts, the park became the first in Kenya to earn a Gold-Level Blue Park Award from the U.S.-based Marine Conservation Institute in 2021.



This underwater photograph shows a part of a coral garden conserved by the local community whose sustained efforts to monitor and protect the reef around the Wasini-Mkwiro have helped the island become a world-renowned eco-tourism destination in Wasini island on June 14, 2026.

- 'Living seed-banks' -

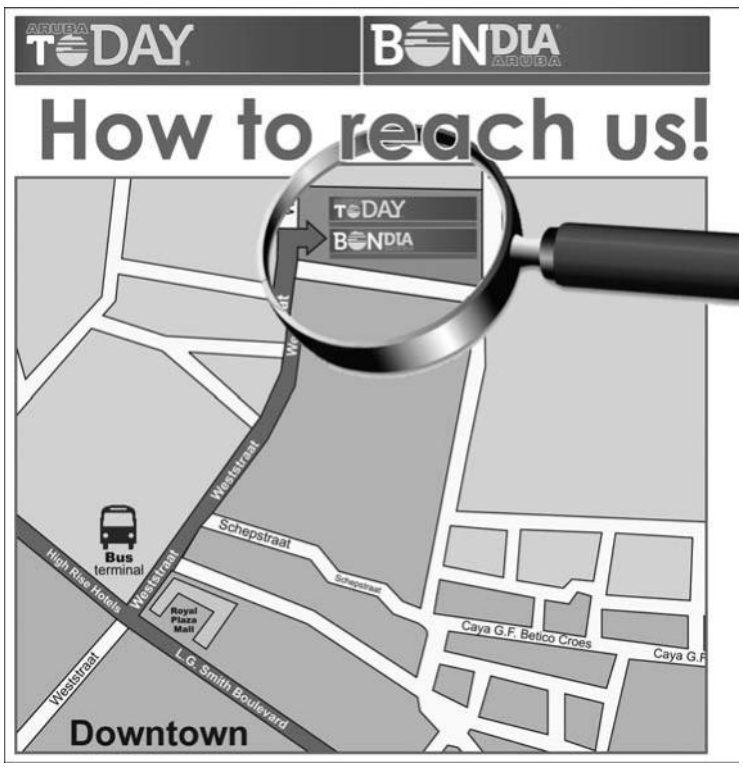
Coral "bleaching" occurs when water temperatures rise by a degree or two, stressing the coral's animal tissues and making them expel algae, turning them white.

But the new study finds many reefs are resilient, either because they exist in cool spots, or because they have evolved to withstand heat, or recover more quickly than most.

"The way we see coral responding to heat events is more nuanced than we previously thought," said Jupiter.

Kenya is fortunate to have a significant stretch of naturally resilient coral.

Divers off traditional wooden dhows at Wasini-Mkwiro find coral species like the boulder-like Porites and staghorn-shaped Acropora supporting a dazzling ecosystem that includes moray eels, angelfish, crabs, turtles, dolphins, and much more.❑



HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad	San Nicolas
Hospital	IMSAN
7:00 pm/10:00pm	24 HOURS
Tel. 527 4000	Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad: Oduber
Tel. 582 1780

San Nicolas: Aloe
Tel. 584 4606

OTHER

Dental Clinic	587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba	587 0002
Urgent Care	586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic	588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Police Oranjestad	527 3140
Police Noord	527 3200
Police Sta. Cruz	527 2900
Police San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulance	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
Tel. 588 0002

FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051

Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952

Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989

Against Domestic Violence(FCVR)
Tel. 583 5400

Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888

Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433

Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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Editors
Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks
Angenette Figuereo
Oriana Geerman

Sales
Mark Gomes
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds
classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection
accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website
Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
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CEO of PAL Robotics Francesco Ferro poses next to robots at the VivaTech technology startups and innovation fair at the Paris Expo Porte de Versailles, in Paris on June 17, 2026.

Robots pour cocktails and run marathons, but still can't multitask

Boston, United States

They can mix cocktails, run marathons and fold laundry. But humanoid robots are still a long way from doing lots of different jobs on command, whatever the marketing says.

The gap was easy to spot at the Robotics Summit in Boston in late May. The glossy brochures promised one thing. The people who actually build the machines said another.

Elon Musk loves to show off his Optimus prototype, recently filmed jogging in short strides. Figure 03, a third-generation robot developed by Figure AI, can tidy and clean a living room by itself.

China's AgiBot and Matrix Robotics say their robots can greet visitors, serve coffee and give them a tour, a little like C-3PO from "Star Wars."

The reality is more modest.

"Most of the humanoids you see are being teleoperated, or they've got very specific paths and chores that they do," said Chris Matthieu of startup RealSense, which makes cameras for robots.

In other words, many are either run by a human with a remote control or stuck doing one narrow task.

Take Neo, the robot that 1X launched with great fanfare last October. It was billed as "the world's first consumer-ready humanoid robot designed to transform life at home" but was actually steered by a person off to the side.

Progress is real, though, and artificial intelligence is driving it. "I think AI has extremely accelerated that growth," said William Okazaki of sensor maker Renesas.

One big hurdle is the hands. Long the holy grail of robotics, they are getting close: robots can now grip with a delicate touch, and some sensors can even tell when they are touching human skin.

Much of this comes from a new kind of AI known as a VLA model, short for vision-language-action. It blends written instructions with what a camera sees in real time, so the robot can link what it is looking at to what it should do.

There is also the "world model" an AI that learns from vast amounts of images and video until it can predict what will happen next in the real world, such as how an object will shift when it is squeezed.

-- Hunt for data --

But an android that can do a bit of everything is still years off.

"For general purpose robots, it will take longer," said Daniel Fan of Innodisk, which makes parts for robots.

Plenty of humanoids are already out in the world Boston Dynamics' Atlas at Hyundai, Hexagon Robotics' AEON at a BMW site but these are trials, not final products.

"Until you actually get the robot actually trying to do the thing you think it can do, you don't really know," said Charlie Kemp of Hello Robot, which sells robots for people with limited mobility.

Running fully on their own, at scale, is not yet possible, "because there is not enough data," said Xinrui Bi of AgiBot.

To gather it, companies are setting up cameras everywhere to record human movement from people cooking at home to workers in a textile workshop in India.

The stakes are higher than for a chatbot like ChatGPT. A robot acts in the physical world, so its mistakes can hurt someone.

"If you want to move into a more social domain, it really has to be safe for the users around the robot," said Valentino Fagard of Japan's XELA Robotics, which works on giving robots a sense of touch.❑

This illustration photo created in Los Angeles, California, on December 5, 2023, shows Rockstar Games' Grand Theft Auto 6 trailer played on computer screens.

Grand Theft Auto VI presales to begin next week

Washington, United States

Pre-sales of Grand Theft Auto VI, the feverishly anticipated video game release, will begin on June 25, Rockstar Games said on Thursday.

GTA VI, due to be released on November 19 after two delays, is the latest entry in the blockbuster franchise and is set to arrive more than 13 years after GTA V, the second best-selling video game in history.

Rockstar Games, owned by New York-based Take-Two Interactive, announced the date in a post on X, saying pre-orders would begin across digital platforms and at select retailers.

Rockstar also released the game's official cover art but did not disclose pricing.

Analysts believe the game will be available at a base price of $80, based on recent comments from Take-Two Interactive CEO Strauss Zelnick and industry reports.

Some analysts and online rumours had speculated the figure could climb toward $100 and reset industry norms.

As popular as it is notorious for its sexual and violent content, the franchise has allowed players to roleplay as criminals doing dirty deeds across sprawling cityscapes since its first entry in 1997.

The newest game was originally due to be released in 2025, with a trailer having shown that it would be set in Miami-like Vice City and would feature a playable female protagonist for the first time.

Critics have from the start accused Grand Theft Auto of glorifying violence and encouraging players to engage in criminal behavior allegations rejected by Take-Two Interactive.

GTA players sell drugs, fight, rob, go on car rampages and more. Gameplay options also include assaulting sex workers and visiting strip clubs, raising the ire of activists.

Asked about the soaring expectations, Take-Two chief executive Strauss Zelnick recently called the situation "very, very exciting and terrifying because the expectations are so high."

The new game returns to Vice City and follows a criminal couple, Jason Duval and Lucia Caminos.

The release's 2013 predecessor, "Grand Theft Auto V," reached $1 billion in sales within three days at the time the fastest any entertainment release had hit that mark. It has since sold more than 230 million copies, trailing only "Minecraft" among the best-selling games ever and its online version has remained a steady earner for more than a decade.❑

Greed or player health? 'Damaging' World Cup drinks breaks under spotlight

Dallas, United States
Virgil van Dijk does not like them, fans have started booing them and the many critics say they are ruining the World Cup.

Hydration breaks last just a total of six minutes during a match, but they stand accused of fundamentally changing the nature of football at the sport's ultimate showpiece.
"Hydration breaks are a bit interesting," said Netherlands captain Van Dijk, whose side drew 2-2 with Japan in Texas on Sunday in an air-conditioned arena.

"I was watching almost all of the games up until today and every time going into a commercial is a bit... not really that I like it.
"I think for the neutral watchers on TV it's also not great."
Also Sunday, over at tournament co-host Mexico, spectators during Sweden's 5-1 thrashing of Tunisia in Monterrey made their disdain plain by booing loudly when the pause came in the first half.

Crysencio Summerville #24 of Netherlands tales a drink during a hydration break in the FIFA World Cup 2026 Group F match between Netherlands and Japan at Dallas Stadium on June 14, 2026 in Arlington, Texas.

Fans similarly jeered the break in Monday's game between Spain and Cape Verde in the air-conditioned arena in Atlanta.
The scheduled drinks breaks, not normally part of football, last three minutes each about midway through both halves of a game at the tournament in North America.
Football's world governing body FIFA says they are designed to protect player health and will be used at all World Cup games no matter where or what the weather.
So during the clash between the Netherlands and Japan, the game was halted even though the match was played in comfortable temperature-controlled conditions under a roof.

- 'Damaged for dollars' -
During the first hydration break at the stadium usually home to the Dallas Cowboys, the NFL team's cheerleaders were shown performing on the giant screen that hovers over the centre of the pitch.
For people in the United States watching on television, broadcasters take the chance to cut away from the game and show commercials.
In American sports, there is nothing unusual in that.
But some critics have accused FIFA of greed, feeding into a narrative that has consistently dogged the tournament and its decision-makers.
The world governing body denies those accusations.
"This is the year when the game of two halves became the game of four quarters," prominent British football writer Henry Winter said. "And the greatest sport and event was damaged for fistfuls of dollars."
In a warning that will send a chill down the spines of traditionalists, Winter warned that the stoppages and the chance for a money-spinning ad break could one day be rolled out everywhere.❑

South Africa hold Czechs, keep World Cup knockout dream alive

Atlanta, United States
Teboho Mokoena's penalty kept South Africa's dream of reaching the World Cup knockout stages for the first time alive after a 1-1 draw with the Czech Republic in Atlanta on Thursday.
Michal Sadilek's early opener had the Czechs on course for just their second World Cup win as an independent nation.
But Mokoena's late spot-kick kept both teams in the hunt for the last 32, although they will almost certainly have to win their final Group A fixture to advance.
Both sides move onto one point, two behind co-hosts Mexico and South Korea, who face off later on Thursday.
South Africa next face South Korea, while the Czech Republic take on the daunting task of playing Mexico in the Estadio Azteca.
"I think we deserved more today because we played a very good game," said South Africa coach Hugo Broos.
"But if we go on like that, and if we can make another performance like today, I think we have a chance to go in the second round."

Both sides started with disappointing performances and defeats on the World Cup's opening day, but the Czechs quickly set about making amends.
Patrik Schick is the biggest name in a Czech side lacking the star quality of previous generations but the Bayer Leverkusen forward missed a glorious chance inside the first minute when he planted a header wide.
Miroslav Koubek's men only had to wait another five minutes to take the lead.
Adam Hlozek's cross was classily cushioned by Alexandr Sojka into the path of Sadilek, who calmly stroked the ball past Ronwen Williams.
Now in their fourth attempt, South Africa have never progressed beyond the group stage at the World Cup.
Broos has overseen an upturn in Bafana Bafana's fortunes since taking charge five years ago.
The 2010 hosts had not qualified for the World Cup since 2002 but finished third at the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations.
Their return to the global stage has exposed a lack of quality, though, particularly in forward areas.
The Czechs were left to rue not making more of their chances to kill the game off early in the second half.

"We are sorry about the result because I think that looking at the chances, we were closer to victory but we were not able to score the second goal," said Koubek.
"If we score the second goal, it would be the end of the match."
There were thousands of empty seats on show at the futuristic home of the NFL's Atlanta Falcons, but those that were in attendance loudly booed the mid-half hydration breaks in an enclosed and air-conditioned stadium.
The majority of the crowd were backing South Africa and finally had something to cheer seven minutes from time.❑

Lukas Cerv #12 of Czechia is tackled by Teboho Mokoena #4 of South Africa during the FIFA World Cup 2026 Group A match between Czechia and South Africa at Atlanta Stadium on June 18, 2026 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Stevens seizes U.S. Open lead with McIlroy, Aberg one back

Southampton, United States Unheralded American Sam Stevens grabbed the early clubhouse lead in Thursday's first round of the US Open with Rory McIlroy and Ludvig Aberg only one stroke adrift.

Gusting winds under overcast skies at Shinnecock combined with thick rough and greens slightly softened by watering to baffle the world's top golfers.

Stevens, who has never won a PGA Tour event, sank a birdie putt from just outside six feet at the ninth hole, his last of the day, to fire a two-under par 68.

The 29-year-old Texan, in only his eighth major start, began with a double bogey at 10, waited through a two-hour fog delay then solved Shinnecock for six birdies against two bogeys.

"Got off to a weird start but made a birdie on the very next hole. Felt like I settled in after that," Stevens said. "Drove the ball well. Hit my irons really well. Had a lot of birdie looks. The greens were a little bit softer. They had to water them. Made a few nice putts."

American amateur Ryder Cowan was at two-under through five holes.

McIlroy, another back-nine starter, closed with back-to-back bogeys after making an 11-foot eagle putt on the par-five fifth to shoot 69 and share second in the clubhouse with Sweden's Aberg and Americans Max Greyserman and Brian Harman.

"Overall, a really good day," McIlroy said. "Obviously it stings a little bit to finish the way that I did, especially not feeling like I hit particularly bad iron shots on eight and nine there."

McIlroy, who won his sixth career major at the Masters in April, stayed patient in tough conditions.

"It was obviously a really tricky day and just a day to stay patient and hang in there, and I hit enough good shots to give myself some chances," he said. "I think anything in red figures today was a good effort."

Second-ranked McIlroy could become just the seventh player to capture the Masters and US Open in the same year, the first since Jordan Spieth in 2015.

Aberg, a back-nine starter chasing his first major title, sank a birdie putt from just inside 30 feet to briefly lead but fell back after a bogey at the fourth after finding the left rough.

"The wind is definitely a big factor," Aberg said.❑

Sam Stevens of the United States lines up a putt on the eighth green during the first round of the 126th U.S. OPEN at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club on June 18, 2026 in Southampton, New York.